



reACT 101- Information Sheet

General Info

>What is reACT?

reACT Against Corporate Tobacco is Montana's teen-led movement against the tobacco industry. Funded and staffed by the Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program, *reACT* joins statewide youth empowerment movements across the country in recognizing the power of young people to effectively take on one of our leading preventable causes of death--tobacco use. In a nutshell, *reACT* is media literacy, peer education, and grassroots advocacy all rolled into one!

>How did reACT start?

The beginnings of *reACT* can be traced to the Teen Leadership Team, now referred to as the *reACT* Core Team, which first convened in January 2006. These 19 teens from across the state were brought together to essentially create the movement- including selection of the name, logo and key messages. *reACT*'s kickoff summit was held at MSU-Bozeman in June 2006. At the summit, which will now be an annual event, 200+ teens gather to learn about *reACT* and how to take action in their communities.

>What are the key messages of reACT?

- ✓ Tobacco companies spend billions of dollars marketing to youth, since they need to replace the over 400,000 customers that die annually. And it works--most tobacco users report starting in their teens.
- ✓ Since teens are being targeted, it is the mission of *reACT* to spread the knowledge that it's happening, and encourage teens to take action against it!
- ✓ *reACT* is against corporate tobacco- tobacco which is marketed and sold with the intent of addiction and profit. *reACT* understands and respects this distinction from ceremonial or traditional tobacco, which is sacred in the Native American community.
- ✓ *reACT* is not against those who use tobacco, but rather, the industry that promotes, addicts, and profits from it. *reACT* aims to **denormalize** and **deglamorize** tobacco.

>Why reACT?

- ✓ Many teens have somewhat of an 'immortality complex'- they don't believe tobacco will harm them, or think that they can quit before addiction or harm occurs. Therefore, traditional health messaging regarding tobacco often doesn't resonate with them.
- ✓ Teens, with a little adult guidance, know what types of messaging and activities work best for their peers.
- ✓ Teens hate to feel manipulated or taken advantage of! When tobacco prevention is presented within the youth empowerment framework, it often inspires them to action.
- ✓ Youth love creative expression/rebellion, and youth empowerment movements such as *reACT* give them a structured, safe and meaningful way to be involved in such efforts.
- ✓ A 'branded' movement will increase the continuity of programming activities in tobacco prevention across Montana, and also give involved teens a common bond statewide.



>The five educational components of *reACT* are:

◇ education ◇ activism ◇ art ◇ branding ◇ media

reACT FAQ's

1) *My teen didn't attend the summit in June--can they still be a part of reACT?*

YES! We invite all teens throughout Montana to be involved in *reACT*. We also encouraged teens at the summit to spread the word in their communities, and provided them with resources to involve their peers in the recruitment effort.

2) *How do I link up with the teens from my area that attended the summit?*

reACT has an Excel spreadsheet listing summit participants and their contact information. Just email us to request it! Or, visit www.reactmt.com click on your county and get the contact information of an adult advisor in your community.

3) *We already have a local youth coalition; do we have to have a separate reACT group?*

No. *reACT* can easily become a part of your existing youth coalition. Think of *reACT* like a message to promote, and your group as a mechanism to spread that message. You can certainly use *reACT*'s logo and messaging as you do teen activities in your community, but you can do that under the umbrella of your existing group.

4) *We'd like some funding to do reACT activities--can the state pay for that?*

Absolutely! *reACT* has a mini-grant program which includes larger grants to develop and sustain *reACT* groups throughout the year, and smaller grants for tobacco days of action (Kick Butts Day, etc.) and for innovative projects. Check out our website for more information or shoot us an email.

5) *Can I make my own reACT gear?*

YES! If you don't already have the logo, just email us for an electronic copy. And if you need gear ideas, just ask!

6) *How does having a 'branded' youth movement affect MTUPP and local activities?*

In an effort to ensure continuity and consistency in messaging across the state, we will begin branding all MTUPP-produced youth prevention materials with the *reACT Against Corporate Tobacco* logo and messaging. We will encourage youth-focused media developed on the local level to include *reACT* messaging whenever possible.

7) *What resources is the state providing to support reACT?*

How can I start a reACT group in my community?

To assist in either starting or sustaining a *reACT* group on the local level, we numerous informational resources, and promotional materials like gear, palm cards, brochures, etc. Training sessions (for adults or teens) are also available- just call to ask!

8) *So reACT is for teens- but what if a 12 year old wants to be involved?*

reACT is based on the premise that 12 year olds (and younger) will want to be involved, much like high schoolers want to do what college students are doing. It's



almost like peer mentoring. The goal is to frame tobacco prevention as an acceptable, even somewhat 'cool', activity. Also, there is a certain maturity level needed to understand the concept of the tobacco industry and its approaches, and based on careful analysis of other states' experiences, the 13-18 age group was selected as ideal for this movement.

9) *What's the deal with statewide initiatives?*

Statewide initiatives are collaborative projects which teens all across the state work on at one time. They are definitely NOT the only thing your *reACT* group can and should be doing- but it is one project or focus area that we expect to have major impact with so many youth working on it. There may also be some special *reACT* action items or projects that come up throughout the year—we will always keep you updated!

10) *What is next for reACT?*

Mini grants, continued development of the *reACT* Core Team, local coalition support, website development, implementation of a statewide media campaign, new and innovative resource creation, and summit preparation will keep us very busy over the next few months!

11) *Who are the reACT staff and what are their main responsibilities?*

Erin Kintop- *Statewide Youth Empowerment Coordinator* 444.7896

- Grassroots promotion, training and recruitment
- Resource development
- Teen Leadership Team oversight
- Youth media approval

Stacy Campbell- *Program Coordinator* 444.3138

- Strategic partnerships/collaboration with MTUPP-funded entities
- Lead contact with UM logistics and support piece, as well as budget
- Assistance with all *reACT* related activities

Sara Williams- *Mini-grant Coordinator* 444.0995

- Mini-Grant process (creation, promotion, selection, TA, evaluation)
- Assistance with all *reACT* related activities

12) *How can adults best support the reACT movement?*

In a youth empowerment movement, it's important to understand and recognize the role of adults. You'll often hear it referred to as "youth-led, adult-guided". What does that mean? A simple formula encourages adults to:

- ✓ EDUCATE-- inform teens about why and how to get involved
- ✓ MOTIVATE-- inspire them to action and support their ideas
- ✓ ADVOCATE-- for them within your organization, school, community, etc.

13) *Where can I get more information on youth empowerment?*

Start by checking out the websites of other statewide youth empowerment programs:

www.reactmt.com www.fightwithfact.com www.jeliowa.org www.razewv.com

And you can always email or call us for more information and resources!

If you've made it this far, you are a *reACT* expert! Feel free to contact us if you have any questions.